



Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church Newsletter



December 2020 – January 2021

You may be struggling to believe in angels at all but look closely at the next message-bearer, the next wound-healer, the next hope-sharer and you might find your very own angel.

May God's love and peace be a haven of security and hope this Advent and Christmas.

© Janet Lees, "Coming in from the Cold", Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, 2013



The Elders would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year



From the Editor..... Dec 2020

**¹⁷ A friend loves at all times,
and kinsfolk are born to share adversity
(Proverbs 17:17)**

I can't believe it's already time for the December – January bulletin! Classic FM will be soon wall-to-wall John Rutter and we can put the Christmas decorations 🎄. But it has been difficult not to focus on what we're missing: the people we're not able to see, the places we're not going and the things we can't do (like sing carols or meet together for worship and fellowship 😞). Turning our attention to the things we do have rather than what we don't is a tough task, but articulating what we're thankful for is a radical act in the midst of a hard time.

So here are the little things I am thankful for that have sustained me this year (in no particular order as they say): Divine dark chocolate with raspberries (and discovering that Divine do online ordering and delivery!); Prosecco and New Zealand Sauvignon blanc; BBC Radio and Classic FM; Father Brown on BBC i-Player; Richard Osman's quiz shows, lockdown quiz emails and his novel "The Thursday Murder Club"; enjoyable escapist crime novels; the sheer sweet loveliness of the participants in Bake-Off, Strictly and I'm A Celebrity; our new cat who wakes us at 6.30am demanding food but who takes such joy in chasing a leaf all over the house; independent take-aways and shops in Chorlton who now deliver (we are so blessed); warm woolly tights from M&S; being back at work and not having to 'shield'...

These are the BIG things for which I am thankful; maybe you have other things for which to be thankful, or maybe you'll agree:

Key workers including:

- NHS and all health workers, support workers and care workers for everything they do, and for the researchers and volunteers bringing us hope in the form of new vaccines and treatments for Covid-19.
- Educators and support staff in schools, colleges and universities, jumping through logistical hoops to try to keep children and young people educated and safe.
- Everyone who works to keep us fed and clothed. Online shopping for allowing us to buy Christmas presents safely, and delivery drivers who must be working flat out!
- My wonderful Funeralcare colleagues and our ministers and celebrants, trying to bring comfort during the hardest times.

Family and friends who have all managed to remain (mostly) sane and cheerful throughout these long months.

Foodbanks for supporting the increasing number of people who now find it impossible to feed themselves and their families, and campaigners who lobby to alleviate food poverty.

Technology that makes it possible for people to stay connected while physically far apart, and makes a form of worship possible.

Our church leaders and members who work so hard to maintain fellowship and support our faith communities while we can't meet in person, especially Rev Lee Battle who cannot have anticipated what her first year in ministry would hold and does a sterling job!

So, however you are celebrating, have a safe Christmas and New Year, so that we can all meet next year and sing our Christmas carols **together!**

Every Blessing, *Mel*

Family News

Deepest condolences are extended to **Joyce Henry** whose husband John died peacefully around midnight on Saturday 21st November. John had been in a care home in Flixton for some time. Visiting was restricted because of Covid19 but Joyce and her daughter Corinne were able to visit him in the days before he passed away. He was 99 years old (he would have been 100 on 28th February 2021). Our thoughts and prayers are with Joyce and her family at this sad time.

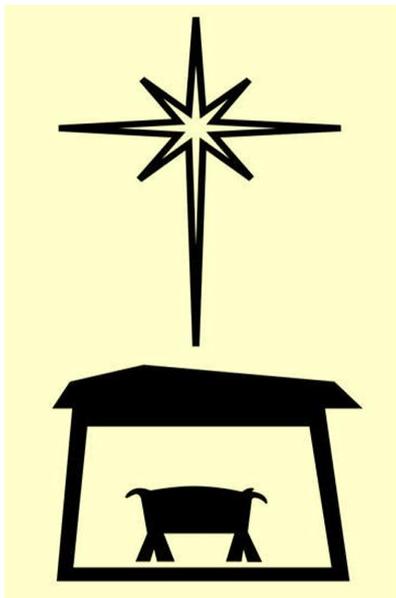
Warmest congratulations to **Jenny Johnson** who celebrated her 99th birthday on 23rd November. Jenny had a quiet birthday but was delighted to receive a hamper from M&S. (Who wouldn't be!). This is another special occasion to celebrate once we are all able to get together again.

Congratulations to **Rosa Hall** who has obtained a distinction in her MSc in Human Resources Management with CIPD Level 7, which she studied for over 2 years at MMU while working as an HR Assistant. The family are very proud and wish her well in her new job at the Dean Trust schools Ashton-on-Mersey High School and Broadoak School, Partington.

Sue Posada sends greetings to everyone from Colombia. She and Mario are well, and Nadia is still living and working in Colombia, while Lauren lives in South Manchester. We wish Sue and the family a happy and peaceful Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Walt Johnson passes on greetings from **Rev Richard Church**. In his email, he wishes all well and hopes and prays that WStN is “flourishing in these difficult circumstances”.

‘Space at the Table’ has provided a welcome meal each Wednesday to members of the congregation isolated at home unable to attend meetings or worship via Zoom. Rev Lee Battle writes: “Another highlight of my week is delivering food with the ‘Space at the Table’ project. I can’t tell you how wonderful it has been seeing people who perhaps can’t join in our zoom service. It is a valued and worthwhile project, not just because it is food but also the personal deliveries and chatting to people really helps out with isolation and loneliness. Just to know that someone cares means a great deal.”



The Nativity tableau is being put up outside church as a beacon of light in Chorlton.

Zaf Blair, who has been carrying out maintenance work for us, and some friends are putting up the tableau for us.

When the church has been dark for most of the year, this is a welcome symbol of hope.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.” (John 1:5)

Christmas Cards

As many church people relied on distributing their Christmas cards by bringing them to church, **Pat Anstis** has kindly offered to help out by collecting and delivering church cards (in a Covid-secure way!). It's likely that Pat would have to restrict this service mainly to **M16** and **M21** postcodes but with some flexibility into surrounding ones such as **M14** or **M32**.

Write your cards with the first name and surname of the recipient on the envelope and have them ready for collection by Pat (Covid securely) from your home by **13th December**.

Before 13th December let Pat know in one of these ways:

- by email at patanstis@hotmail.co.uk
- by mobile on 07742573354
- or landline on 0161 226 7894
(Pat says she almost never picks up landline calls but it's a good way to leave messages)

Give your name and address so Pat will know where to collect the cards, which she will do on or around **14th December**.

Pat will then quarantine the cards at home for 3 or 4 days then sort them out and deliver them in Covid-secure bundles to the recipients.

Zoom Church Meeting

20th December at 1.45pm

Zoom details will be emailed to everyone with the requisite technology

Christmas Quiz

The answers to the questions are all real or fictional characters with a name found in the Nativity story (though it may not be spelled the same.)

1. I was born in Argentina and I play football for Manchester City (full name scores 2 points)
2. I'm the friendly ghost
3. I'm an Irish actor, producer and director who starred in "The Usual Suspects" and has won Emmy awards for Best Actor in a TV Series for my role as a psychotherapist. I have just published a memoir.
4. I am Portia's masculine alter-ego, as well as a minor character in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice"
5. I am a centaur in "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone"
6. I was the first American to go into space and the fifth man to walk on the Moon
7. I am a vampire in an iconic TV show. Sadly, I was doomed never to be with the girl I loved but I did get my own spin-off series (named after me)
8. Though known by the shorter form of my first name, I will take office as the 46th President of the United States of America in January 2021
9. I am practically perfect in every way
10. I was the Beatles' drummer

Answers on page 9



Christmas Partnership Services – led by Rev Lee Battle

Service	Date/Time	Zoom Meeting ID	Password
Quiz Night	Sat 5 th Dec 7.30pm	832 3589 0540	147246
Mindful Service	Sun 13 th Dec 7pm	810 9990 1433	680371
Service for Remembering	Thurs 17 th Dec 7pm	860 9118 4357	732649
Lessons and Carols	Sat 20 th Dec 7.30pm	886 3962 8807	197265
Christingle	Thurs 24 th Dec 4pm	853 3278 1219	878609
Christmas Eve Midnight	Thurs 24 th Dec 11.30pm	885 367 9120	045644
Christmas Day	Fri 25 th Dec 11.00am	831 4504 6422	681470
New Year's Eve	Thurs 31 Dec 8pm	862 7665 3243	602625

In addition to this, every evening from 26th – 30th December (inclusive) Lee will be on Zoom between 6-7pm. Please use Meeting ID – 770 690 9432, for every evening.

Christmas Quiz Answers

1. Gabriel Jesus
2. Caspar
3. Gabriel Byrne.
4. Balthazar
5. Melchior
6. Alan Shepard
7. Angel
8. Joe (Joseph) Biden
9. Mary Poppins
10. Ringo Starr

Bonus Question

Wales has several towns and villages named after places in the Bible. But in which Welsh counties would you find

- a. Bethlehem
 - b. Nazareth (or Nasareth as it's spelled in Welsh)
-

a. Carmarthenshire, in the Tywi Valley, to the northeast of Llandeilo.
b. Gwynedd, in the Nantlle valley near the village of Nebo (named for the mountain where Moses stood to view the promised land)



Advent Candle Prayers

Some of you might like to light a candle each Sunday in Advent or even have your own Advent wreath. Here are some prayers we might have used in church this year.

Advent 1 – Hope (29th November)

In a world where so many despair,
God lights a candle of hope in our hearts.

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,

*O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas. (Psalm 65:5)*

Jesus you are coming again,

Help us to live in the hope you bring.

Light of the world, light the way

Advent 2 – Peace (8th December)

In a world where so many experience violence,
God lights a candle of peace in our hearts.

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break
upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow
of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’ (Luke 1:78, 79)*

Jesus you are coming again

Help us to share the peace you give.

Light of the world, light the way

Advent 3 – Joy (15th December)

In a world where so many are sorrowful,
God lights a candle of joy in our hearts.

*The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the
nations; the Gentiles will hope in him. (Romans 15:12)*

Jesus you are coming again,
Help us to share the joy you bring.
Light of the world, light the way

Advent 4 – Love (22nd December)

In a world where so many experience hatred
God lights a candle of love in our hearts.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Jesus you are coming again
Help us to share your joy
Light of the world, light the way.

Christ Candle for Christmas Eve (24th December)

In a world where so many wait in darkness,
light comes into our hearts through a baby born in a manger!
He is God-with-us, Christ the Lord!

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Jesus, light of the world, be born in us this night,
in our hearts, our minds, our lives.
May the light of your life be kindled in us,
Light of the world, light the way.

“¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)



Lectionary Bible Readings for December and January

Nov 29 th Advent 1	<i>Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80.1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37</i>
Dec 6 th Advent 2	<i>Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8</i>
Dec 13 th Advent 3	<i>Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; Psalm 126; Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat); 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8,19-28</i>
Dec 20 th Advent 4	<i>2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat); Psalm 89:1-4,19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38</i>
Dec 24 th / 25 th Christmas Day	<i>Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20</i>
Dec 27 th Christmas 1	<i>Isaiah 61:10-62.3; Psalm 148; Galatians:4.4-7; Luke 2:22-40</i>
Jan 3 rd Epiphany	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3.1-12; Matthew 2.1-12</i>
Jan 10 th Baptism of Jesus	<i>Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11</i>
Jan 17 th Epiphany 2	<i>1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6,13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51</i>
Jan 24 th Epiphany 3	<i>Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20</i>

The possibility of a vaccine gives us all hope for 2021.
In the meantime, everyone stay safe and well!